

Appendix table 7-1.

**Level of public interest in selected policy issues: 1979–2001**  
(Percentages)

Issue	1979			1981			1983			1985			1988			1990			1992			1995			1997			1999					
	VI	MI	NI																														
New medical discoveries .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	68	29	3	72	25	3	68	29	3	66	31	3	69	27	4	70	26	4	68	28	4	65	32	4			
Local schools .....	38	37	25	46	36	18	46	36	18	47	39	13	51	33	15	50	34	16	53	35	12	57	31	13	58	30	11	54	34	12	59	31	10
Environmental pollution .....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	64	31	5	59	36	5	53	41	6	52	40	8	51	41	8	48	43	8			
New scientific discoveries .....	36	49	14	37	45	17	48	40	11	44	44	12	43	46	12	39	48	12	36	49	15	44	45	11	49	42	8	45	43	11	47	45	9
Economy and business conditions .....	35	48	17	52	37	10	57	33	10	48	41	11	48	42	10	50	40	10	56	36	8	47	42	11	47	42	11	42	45	13	45	45	10
New inventions and technologies .....	33	51	15	33	50	16	42	45	12	39	49	12	40	48	12	39	49	12	37	53	10	43	46	11	47	43	10	41	48	10	43	47	10
Military and defense policy ....	—	—	—	—	—	—	43	42	15	47	42	11	47	42	11	55	35	10	47	43	10	37	46	17	35	48	17	42	44	14	38	44	18
Agriculture and farming.....	23	49	28	24	47	28	—	—	—	30	48	22	40	45	15	24	48	28	—	—	—	21	53	26	24	50	26	22	50	28	29	46	25
International and foreign policy .....	22	53	24	35	47	18	30	47	22	33	51	16	33	50	16	48	40	12	38	47	15	21	53	26	22	50	28	30	47	23	28	49	23
Space exploration .....	—	—	—	25	44	31	27	45	28	29	46	25	34	44	22	26	48	26	22	50	28	25	49	26	32	45	22	28	46	25	26	47	27
Sample size (number)	1,635			3,195			1,631			2,005			2,041			2,033			2,001			2,006			2,000			1,882			1,574		

— = not asked; VI = very interested; MI = moderately interested; NI = not interested

NOTES: Respondents were read the following statement: "There are a lot of issues in the news, and it is hard to keep up with every area. I'm going to read you a short list of issues, and for each one—as I read it—I would like you to tell me if you are very interested, moderately interested, or not at all interested." "Don't know" responses are not included. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics (NSF/SRS), NSF Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology, various years.

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